



STATE OF ARIZONA

JANICE K. BREWER
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

May 26, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of the State of Arizona, it is my privilege and honor to commend to you Arizona's Phase II Race to the Top application. The process of preparing this application over the last several months has brought together educators from traditional and charter schools, higher education, elected officials, business representatives, foundation leaders, Native American leaders, and innovative education policy experts to contemplate Arizona's future for education. The result is a bold and visionary path to education excellence.

In our application we tell the unique story of Arizona, building upon our history of strength, competitiveness and innovation. In doing so, we will accelerate the diversification of our economy to sectors representing aerospace, biotechnology, computer chips, development, and renewable energy. This, in turn, will continue to build a strong workforce for Arizona and contribute to your efforts to make our nation more competitive in the world economy.

The application incorporates the provisions of several pieces of significant education-related legislation enacted in Arizona earlier this year. We are proud to have put in place provisions for new alternative certification procedures for teachers and principals and a new program for teacher and principal evaluations. We have created a new systemic approach for managing education data that will promote the goals of transparency and accountability. Finally, we have new measures that will mitigate the achievement gap in a manner consistent with the goals set forth in Race to the Top. Taken together, these measures aggressively support the goals set forth in the Race to the Top application.

Elevating our standards and expectations for every child will continue to be necessary for our state as well as the nation as a whole for the foreseeable future. I intend to lead Arizona through this reform process even in the face of unprecedented revenue shortages. The budget challenges in our state will not deter us from our goal.

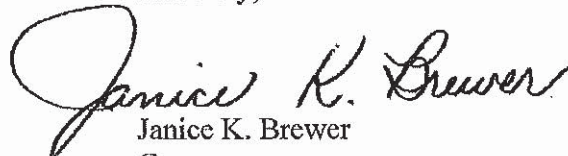
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Despite having one of the largest deficits of any state in the nation as a percent of its overall budget, I made a firm commitment that Arizona would not go below the education maintenance of effort requirement as part of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The budget enacted for Fiscal Year 2011 keeps that commitment.

My pledge to education was affirmed on May 18 by the voters of this great state by virtue of the passage of Proposition 100 to provide for a temporary one-cent sales tax dedicated primarily to education funding. Proposition 100 brought together all Arizonans to support public education—from Republicans to Democrats, school administrators to teacher associations, urban to rural areas, charter to traditional public schools, and the business community to labor unions. The voters responded with an overwhelming 64% approval of the measure. This level of commitment by Arizonans of the need to support education in the future is a virtual guarantee of a high level of sustainability for Race to the Top reforms.

Mr. Secretary, Arizona is committed to the implementation of the systemic improvements to education embodied in Race to the Top. The approach detailed in this application will serve to close the student achievement gap and raise expectations for educators, parents and students alike. Our innovative approach is clearly worthy of your strongest support. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Janice K. Brewer
Governor

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